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MISCELLANY AND NOTICES.

THE PAUPER ABSTRACT OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Twenty-first Annual Report of the State Board of Charity of Massachusetts. Boston. January, 1900.

The statistical tables appended to the last report of the Massachusetts State Board of Charity show some interesting improvements over the summaries published in previous volumes. The first table in the abstract contains as usual records of the sums spent for support and relief by each city and town, sub-divided according to the nature of the relief and the sort of institution concerned. An instructive new feature, however, is the column of figures showing the net amount of ordinary expense for pauper support and relief for the year ending March 31, 1899, per inhabitant, as given by the census of 1895, and the accompanying column which gives the rank of the cities and towns on the basis of this per capita expenditure. The variation is very wide,—from Gosnold which has no pauper expense, Windsor where the expense is .01 per capita, and Gill, Gay Head, Holland, and Littleton where it is .07, .12, .13, and .19, respectively,—up to Burlington where the per capita cost is \$3.03, and Brewster, Yarmouth, Cohasset, and Halifax where the figures are \$2.68, \$2.58, \$2.51, and \$2.44. The averages by counties range from \$0.82 in Middlesex to \$1.72 in Nantucket, and \$1.46 in Barnstable, the highest value for a county of considerable size; the average for the state is exactly \$1.00.

The second table, giving the numbers of persons supported and relieved in the various cities and towns, is also improved by a calculation of average values, a column of figures being introduced to show the whole number of paupers, including vagrants, per 1000 inhabitants. Here the range is from Gay Head and Gosnold, where there were no paupers assisted during the year, and West Tisbury, Dover, Lincoln, and New Braintree where the numbers were 4.3, 4.5, 5.4, and 5.5 per 1000, respectively, up to Yarmouth with 84.6 paupers per 1000, Fall River with 84.1, and Marlboro, Woburn, and Chelsea

where the corresponding figures are 82.7, 76.4, and 74.3, respectively. The figures for counties vary from 19.6 paupers per 1000 in Dukes, and 25.6 in Norfolk up to 53.7 in Bristol. The average for the state is 36.6 paupers per 1000 inhabitants. It is to be noted that in all these calculations the pauper statistics of 1898-99 are compared with the population for 1895, so that the absolute numbers are in most cases excessively high.

The third important innovation is in the third table of the report which concerns the treatment of the various classes of paupers in each city and town. In the *Twentieth Report* of the Board the number of children under 16, the number of idiotic persons and of insane persons were given, with the proportion of children cared for in almshouses. In the new report the total number of paupers is first divided into the sane and the mentally defective, the former class being sub-divided into those under and over 16, the latter into the insane and the idiotic. Under each of the first two sub-classes the number of persons cared for in almshouses and in other institutions, those relieved in their own homes, and those boarded in other private families, is given. The mentally defective are divided into those cared for in almshouses, those treated in hospitals, asylums, and schools for the feeble-minded, and those boarded in private families. The general policy of each city and town in dealing with its pauper population is thus shown in a clear and comprehensive manner.

C.-E. A. WINSLOW.

ROUND NUMBERS.

The tendency of the maxima in any series of estimated numbers to collect about even numbers, or multiples of ten, or any round numbers which catch the attention of the unscientific observer has been pointed out in many instances. It shows itself most clearly perhaps in estimates of the ages of illiterate populations where maxima are always found at the ten-year periods. Dr. Edward D. Jones brought out some interesting points of this sort in connection with commercial statistics in these *Publications* for 1896 in a paper on "Round Numbers in Wages and Prices."